

This record is a partial extract of the original cable. The full text of the original cable is not available.

UNCLAS ADANA 000169

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

NOT FOR INTERNET DISTRIBUTION

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [PGOV](#) [TU](#) [ADANA](#)

SUBJECT: ANXIOUS SOUTHEAST TURKEY PONDERES EU INTEGRATION IN THE BALANCE

REF: ANKARA 5932

1.(SBU) Summary: Contacts throughout Turkey's Kurdish southeastern provinces are very anxious as Turkey's EU integration hangs in the balance. Many are looking over their shoulders at recurring, low-scale regional violence and rising nationalism, fearing renewed wider sectarian violence should the EU integration process not provide a way to break the regional rhythm of action and reaction between the PKK and GoT security forces. End Summary.

2.(SBU) AMCON Adana traveled throughout southeast Turkey from September 26 to October 1, visiting Diyarbakir twice and ranging as far as Hakkari, the southeastern most and poorest Turkish province, where the military is engaged in open conflict with the PKK. The mood about the EU process among contacts was downbeat and very nervous. Many contacts described the initial optimism created by PM Erdogan's naming of the Kurdish issue in his August 12 Diyarbakir speech being strongly diluted by TGS CHOD Hilmi Ozkok's September 11-14 southeastern Turkey speaking engagements emphasizing "unity and solidarity" in the face of "provocations" and "the dangers of ethnic nationalism" (Note: Ozkok spoke in Van, Diyarbakir and Adana all in an approximately one week SE regional tour. End Note.)

3.(SBU) "Politically, we are at a stalemate. Erdogan leaned forward and Ozkok pulled us back. The (state elites) do not want democratization to happen like this. They want social and economic development (for southeast Turkey), but no political development," one longtime human right contact described. Another contact said that "southeastern Turkey, without a major consistent outside pressure like the EU process, is paralyzed between the opposing pressures from the conservative Kemalist elements of the GoT and equally unrelenting Kurdish nationalists."

4.(SBU) Many contacts said that the situation, which is already punctuated by what they called "calculated violence by both the (GoT) and PKK," easily could drift back into heavier sectarian conflict without the lure of the EU process to channel momentum toward democratization and reconciliation. In fact, contacts in Hakkari and Van reported flows of dozens of new recruits heading to join the PKK from border provinces like Hakkari and Sirnak. AMCON Adana meetings with the new Kurdish party, the Democratic Society Movement, also revealed no movement away from its previous pro-PKK positions. Additionally, in the last two weeks, there have been over a dozen clashes involving multiple fatalities, serious non-lethal casualties, controlled bomb incidents or narrowly averted bomb attacks in Van, Hakkari, Sirnak, Erzincan and Bingol.

5.(SBU) Despite later endorsement by the pro-Kurdish mayor, Diyarbakir civil society contacts also were very suspicious that their planned October 2 several hundred thousand-strong "Yes to the EU" rally in Diyarbakir was cancelled by the provincial governor, primarily since its nationalist, anti-EU counterpart rally was allowed to continue in Ankara. "Nationalists are on the offensive now," several contacts said, warning that current anti-EU sentiment could quickly transform into Turkish-Kurdish ethnic conflicts in mixed provinces like Adana, Mersin and Izmir, where the nationalist MHP is amply supported.

6. (SBU) Comment: AMCON Adana's contacts in predominantly Kurdish southeastern Turkey, after years of conflict and empty promises, often can tend toward gloomy prognosis, but their current tone still bears serious consideration. The momentum toward conflict in Turkey's southeastern provinces which they comment has been building since Spring 2005 is not irreversible, but it is troubling. Despite Prime Minister Erdogan's stated commitment to reform no matter what the EU path may yield, absent an EU process to anchor Turkey's reform process and buoy the AK Party's advocacy of specific implementation steps, the region's predominantly Kurdish population could suffer a serious loss of confidence in the overall GoT commitment to the meaningful political reform which they have been awaiting. Faced with such a psychological setback, voices for moderation in the small Kurdish civil society seriously risk being drowned out by nationalist, generally pro-PKK Kurds. End Comment.

7.(SBU) Baghdad minimize considered.